

FiftyForward is Celebrating Older Americans This May!



Joan Lunden is the featured speaker
at Older Americans Month Breakfast

We at FiftyForward celebrate older adults every day. This May we will be holding special events, like many across the country, to highlight the incredibly important role older adults play in our community and the contributions they make.

According to the Administration for Community Living, Older Americans Month was established in 1963 because only 17 million Americans had reached their 65th birthday. The month's focus was to draw attention to the concerns facing older adults while also elevating their stories and having fun celebrating this season of life.

Since President John F. Kennedy designated May as Older Americans Month, the Administration for Community Living says that every president since has signed a proclamation to pay tribute to older Americans. For FiftyForward, the celebration begins with our Older Americans Month Breakfast on Tuesday, May 2, at Geodis Park. Joan Lunden, the famed journalist, and trusted personality, will be the featured speaker.

The former "Good Morning America" anchor published a book in 2020 about aging entitled "Why Did I Come into This Room; A Candid Conversation About Aging," as she juggled being a working mother while being the primary caregiver for her mother.

Approximately 150,000 Middle Tennesseans are over 65 and contribute economically, culturally, and socially to this region. That alone is worth celebrating. FiftyForward will celebrate the rich stories, contributions, and lives of older adults in May.

For more information about both Older Americans Month events, visit www.fiftyforward.org/special-events

Old Americans Month Celebration

Join us for an evening of dinner and dancing to celebrate Older Americans Month with your fellow FiftyForward members and friends. We hope to see you on Thursday, May 18, at FiftyForward Martin Center. Cocktail hour kicks off at 6:00 pm. Dinner and dancing will begin at 7:00 pm. Tickets for FiftyForward members are \$30. For more information, visit www.fiftyforward.org/celebration

Dear FiftyForward Friends,



Welcome to the first edition of our newly revamped newsletter. So much has changed over the past few years, including how we reach out to older adults and the community. I hope you've seen and heard some new ways we provide information and share stories through our podcast Squeeze the Day and video series FiftyForward Exchange. Our social media channels are also a great way to see what is happening near you quickly. We're adapting as you adapt and connecting in ways to keep you engaged.

For over 65 years, FiftyForward has been a trusted resource for older adults and their families across Middle Tennessee. This newsletter is one small thing we revived to be more relevant with the changing times. We are committed to sharing our expertise, experience, and resources each quarter through this newsletter because our mission to support, champion, and enhance adults over 50 is at the forefront of everything we do.

Speaking of updates, with tremendous work and thought, we have also updated our agency values to reflect FiftyForward today. I am proud to work alongside talented, creative individuals who value service, kindness, compassion, integrity, connection, and community in an agency that serves older adults, combats isolation, and helps individuals live life to the fullest. Read more about the FiftyForward experience in the pages ahead and enjoy this first issue!

I hope to see you soon at one of our events, programs, or centers.

Sallie



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Caring for Individuals with Dementia



Individuals impacted by dementia are some of the most vulnerable members of our society. Dementia is cognitive impairment (problems thinking, remembering and/or making decisions) that interferes with a person's ability to engage in everyday activities. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, but dementia is also associated with Parkinson's disease and other conditions. There is no cure for Alzheimer's and other dementias.

Women are twice as likely to have dementia as men, primarily due to longer life expectancy. Approximately 5.8 million people in the U.S. have Alzheimer's disease, and related dementias, which is expected to rise to 14 million by 2060.

Dementia is a progressive, neurodegenerative disease, and families provide most care for individuals with dementia. While caring for those we love can be rewarding, caring for a spouse or parent with dementia is also taxing. And most adult children of people with dementia are in their prime work years, often with children of their own. As a result, their ability to continue working – and their long-term economic stability -- can be affected by the availability of affordable care resources.

A constellation of care options is necessary to assist caregivers. Support and peer groups, in-home care, and residential care are more or less accessible to families, often related to economic factors. Community-based care, such as adult day programs, a less familiar option, offers caregivers respite and provides individuals with dementia with the chance to remain connected with peers and engaged in activities that bring them joy. Adult day programs provide a supportive, non-judgmental environment where people with dementia can be themselves and be valued for their strengths.

It is beneficial when families can take stock of available caregiving resources before they are needed to create a viable plan for future care to support those they love and themselves as caregivers. FiftyForward is committed to supporting and partnering with individuals with dementia and their caregivers. To see how FiftyForward can help, visit <https://fiftyforward.org/>

By FiftyForward Chief Program Officer, Gretchen Funk

Longtime FiftyForward volunteer Ed Batsel nominated for an award

By AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Coordinator, Jen Jackson

FiftyForward Fresh Meals on Wheels is happy to announce the nomination of Ed Batsel for the Mary Catherine Strobel Volunteer award in the Older Adult Direct Service category. This award honors those who give their time and talents to help better the community through volunteerism.

Ed is one of our longest-serving volunteers for FiftyForward Fresh Meals on Wheels, clocking in at 25 years of service and over 2,000 volunteer hours. He has been volunteering so long that he predates our volunteer-hour collection database!

Ed began his service with FiftyForward Meals on Wheels as a group member from Belmont United Methodist Church.

This group was among the most dedicated and consistent meal delivery teams in the history of our program. Post-COVID, Ed took on his own route, and his dedication to the well-being of the clients he serves has been an example to many other volunteers.

And, as far as I am concerned, I get a lot more out of volunteering for Meals on Wheels than I ever put into it.

When asked about his favorite memory from the past 25 years, Ed responded, "I keep having best memory occasions." Ed recalled a story saying, "I remember vividly the comment a client made the first time I visited with her.

'You know, you folks are the only people I see during the week.' I have always felt that in those cases, my presence at their door makes their day better. And, as far as I am concerned, I get a lot more out of volunteering for Meals on Wheels than I ever put into it. I have never had a bad day. There are not many things one can do that are like that."



Older Adults

Tech Help Corner

Sometimes a computer or phone won't do what you want, making people wonder if technology is worth the trouble. It's not uncommon to wish someone would patiently explain how to make a device's features - such as email, streaming, or photo sharing - work as they should.

Thanks to student volunteers from Valor College Prep and G.O.D. International that wish has come true. Three FiftyForward centers provide Tech Help once a week.

On Wednesday afternoons FiftyForward Donelson Station, FiftyForward Knowles, and FiftyForward Madison Station offer the opportunity to meet one-on-one and ask specific questions.

Volunteers answer questions at the participant's pace and walk them through solving the problem.

Exploring FiftyForward Friends

Martha's passion for music remains strong after dementia diagnosis

By FiftyForward Friends Adult Day Services Director, Georgina Dench

Martha Willis is an incredibly generous, compassionate, and knowledgeable person. She has degrees in music education and speech communication, which led her to work for Kids on the Block as a Puppeteer educator and music teacher for many years. A few years ago, her husband noticed some cognitive decline in Martha. She was formally diagnosed with Alzheimer's in October 2021.

For many people, a dementia diagnosis can mean a loss of identity as the roles we used to play and the passions we used to have get diminished and replaced with the identity of having dementia. At FiftyForward Friends, we are trying to put an end to that. We focus on what our participants can do, not what they can't do.

In Martha's case, her musical talent and passion remain strong. One of Martha's favorite instruments is the recorder. She was a part of the Callisto Recorder Group and even helped facilitate a few performances here at the center. In January, Martha brought her collection of recorders to share with the rest of the Friends group.

Activity Coordinator Daniel Christian began thinking about how he could start a recorder group in the program. Just a few hours after this initial thought, we received an email from First Lady Maria Lee stating they wanted to support FiftyForward as part of her #TennesseeServes campaign.

We quickly took advantage of that offer and requested a set of Yamaha recorders. Martha was thrilled to unpack the recorders and teach her new Friends proper technique and a few tunes. Stay tuned for an upcoming performance!



SQUEEZE THE DAY

Mario Andretti shares his story of resilience -- from childhood in Italy and a refugee camp to life in America, he's passionate about winning on and off the racetrack.

In this podcast, where we showcase inspiring stories of older adults living their best lives now, Mario Andretti demonstrates how he squeezes the day.

Mario is a legend and is considered one of history's most successful racers. His roots and childhood likely contributed to his strength and determination. Today, the Andretti brand extends well beyond racing.



TO LISTEN TO OUR SQUEEZE THE DAY PODCASTS, GO TO [FIFTYFORWARD.ORG/PODCAST/](https://fiftyforward.org/podcast/) OR ON YOUR FAVORITE PODCAST PLATFORM.



Bernie Sheahan had a storied career in PR, radio, and as a columnist at the "Nashville Scene." So when her editor encouraged her to write an account of her very personal mental health journey, the cover story received incredible responses and community support.

In this inspiring podcast, we'll learn how she manages her mental health, why coaching middle schoolers is a calling, and how being a family caregiver sparked a new life interest.

Have you checked out our video series, FiftyForward Exchange? In the latest episode, Sallie Hussey, CEO of FiftyForward, talked with Tennessee Alzheimer's Association Executive Director Dawne Bunn. See other episodes: <https://fiftyforward.org/videos/>



All of Us RESEARCH PROGRAM

The
Future of
Health Begins
With You

A Diverse *All of Us* dataset helps advance medical research for all



By FiftyForward All of Us Project Director, Kelsey Mahaffey

How many of us know someone whose life was improved by modern medical treatments? What if there were a way to help drive research further simply by sharing health information? Enter the *All of Us* Research Program from the National Institutes of Health. *All of Us* aims to advance precision medicine, or more simply put, to create healthcare tailored to us as individuals rather than "one size fits all." The program seeks 1,000,000 volunteers from diverse backgrounds to share their health data, helping researchers find better treatments and cures for all of us.

All of Us is already one of the largest and most diverse datasets of its kind, with 80% of participants coming from communities historically underrepresented in research, like older adults. The data collected through *All of Us* allows researchers to increase their understanding of ANY disease and how diseases affect communities differently.

Let's take dementia, for example. Close to 55 million people worldwide are living with dementia. According to Alzheimer's Disease International, "almost 80% of the general public are concerned about developing dementia at some point, and 1 in 4 people think that there is nothing we can do to prevent dementia."

No cure for dementia exists now. But *All of Us* aims to speed up what we learn to help find cures sooner. Researchers can come to *All of Us* data and search for patterns using participants' health surveys, medical records, and biospecimens. Currently, in the *All of Us* workbench, there are 25 active research projects on dementia alone.

Close to 600,000 people have joined *All of Us* since 2018. Won't you consider joining them? To get started or learn more, please visit www.joinallofus.org/fiftyforward.



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FiftyForward Values

At FiftyForward, we created and adopted a set of values that guide and direct how we carry out our mission, interact with others, and deliver our services.

These values include service, kindness, compassion, integrity, connection, and community.

To find a complete description of our values, head to <https://fiftyforward.org/about/>.

Our Seven Life Long Learning Centers

- Bordeaux - 3315 John Mallette Drive Nashville, TN 37218
- College Grove - 8607 Horton Highway College Grove, TN 37046
- Donelson Station - 108 Donelson Pike Nashville, TN 37214
- J. L. Turner - 8101 Highway 100 Nashville, TN 37221
- Knowles - 174 Rains Avenue Nashville, TN 37203
- Madison Station - 530 Madison Station Blvd. Madison, TN 37115
- Martin Center - 960 Heritage Way Brentwood, TN 37027

<https://fiftyforward.org/>

If you know of an older adult in need, please call us Monday-Friday at 615-743-3416